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OLD PROBLEMS
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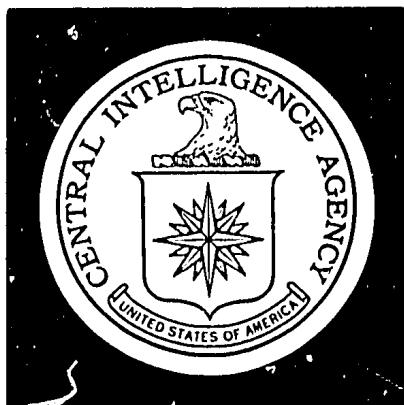
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DIRECTORATE OF
INTELLIGENCE

WEEKLY SUMMARY

Special Report

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New Politics and Old Problems in Kenya

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NEW POLITICS AND OLD PROBLEMS IN KENYA

Kenya, until last July a much-heralded model of African stability and progress, has emerged intact from six months of serious unrest and political crisis. Tribal tensions have subsided, and the violence set off by the assassination of Tom Mboya has ended. The country's first national parliamentary elections in December were conducted honestly and served as a safety valve, allowing the people to express their discontent by electing their own representatives.

Over 60 percent of the next parliament will be newly elected members. This new parliament may mark the beginning of a new political era in Kenya, or at least may begin a new phase within the era dominated by Jomo Kenyatta, now nearly 80 years old. The other two of the three most prominent politicians of the past six years are gone; Tom Mboya is dead, Oginga Odinga imprisoned.

The bitter rivalries that provoked the crisis remain, however. Kenya's leadership is still in the hands of President Kenyatta and his clique from the Kikuyu tribe. This group, which rarely demonstrated much sensitivity during the past several months, faces many serious problems. One of the most important of these is the succession after Kenyatta dies: how to make the transition while avoiding a disastrous tribal conflict.

NEW POLITICS

President Jomo Kenyatta announced early in 1969 that his country's first general elections would be held within the next few months. Many observers believed that these elections—if honestly conducted—would be a good test for Kenya's three competing political groups. A particularly bitter struggle was expected between two of these, the rival factions within the ruling Kenya Africa National Union (KANU).

One faction within KANU was led by Kenyatta's advisers. A long-range goal of these Kikuyu politicians was to ensure that their tribe would continue dominant. They took this position not only because Kikuyu hegemony provided them the perquisites of office, but also because



Jomo Kenyatta

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Tom Mboya

they believed that the tribe—Kenya's largest and the leading force in the nationalist struggles, including the Mau Mau revolt—should naturally hold first place in independent Kenya.

The other KANU faction was based largely on opposition to Kikuyu hegemony. It was organized by Tom Mboya, a brilliant politician and the party's secretary as well as minister for economic development. Mboya was a member of Kenya's second largest tribe, the Luo, whom the Kikuyu consider their foremost rivals; he did not have much Luo tribal support, however. Nevertheless, through excellent organizing and good financing, he had welded a genuinely multiracial alliance.

The third major political group was the Kenya People's Union (KPU), the only formal opposition party, led by Oginga Odinga. Once a close associate of Kenyatta, Odinga formed the KPU in 1966 after Mboya and the Kikuyu establishment combined to drive him and other left wingers from KANU.

—the KPU was unable to make much head-

way against the determined opposition of the KANU leadership. The KPU had a strong following in Luo areas, however, and Odinga hoped that the elections would give him an opportunity to make gains in other parts of Kenya.

These hopes and the conflicts of early 1969 were overwhelmed in the series of events that followed; by the time elections were finally held in December, the Kenyatta forces were free of an effective opposition. The assassination of Mboya on 5 July by a Kikuyu, whose motivation remains unknown, completely disorganized his followers, and his faction disintegrated. Odinga attempted to make political capital of the suspicions among many non-Kikuyus that the assassin had been hired by the Kikuyu establishment. In retaliation, the government imprisoned Odinga and banned his party.

The election campaign was thus stripped of any semblance of nationwide competition between opposing blocs, and local issues dominated the contests in most constituencies. There was no lack of enthusiasm for the elections, however; over 600 candidates competed for the 158 seats in what was technically the KANU party primary.



Oginga Odinga

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(After the KPU was banned, the primaries became, in effect, the general elections, and every registered voter was permitted to vote if he wished.) The candidates waged vigorous campaigns in most areas, exploiting such local issues as dissatisfaction with incumbents who had spent more time enjoying the good life in Nairobi than in making contacts with their constituents, or who had failed to bring economic development projects into their home area.

In the final count, only 54 incumbents retained their seats. Significantly, all members of the Kikuyu clique were returned by their fellow tribesmen. Only in the Luo tribal areas was there clearly an anti-Kikuyu cast to the vote. All the Luo incumbents were defeated, presumably because the voters felt they had cooperated with the Kikuyu—at least by association—after the assassination.

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TWO OLD PROBLEMS: TRIBAL RIVALRIES AND SUCCESSION

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Sixty-two percent of the National Assembly will be new members, most of them younger and better qualified than their predecessors. Nevertheless, basic problems persist. The elections may have eased tensions by providing an outlet for pent-up emotions, but tribal rivalries and suspicion are still prime factors in Kenyan politics. Nearly all the members of the National Assembly represent tribal constituencies, and all are well aware of the need to defend their tribes' interests. The people, moreover, have high expectations for better health services, educational facilities, and economic opportunity. In many areas, there is a clamor for more and better land. The government lacks the resources to satisfy these demands, however, and the process of parceling out what is available for economic development is further complicated by intertribal competition.



Daniel Moi

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Underlying and complicating many of the political struggles is the question of presidential succession. Although Kenyatta continues to govern with considerable vigor, [redacted]

[redacted] Finding a successor is difficult because no other leader combines his qualifications—age and dignity, a history of nationalist endeavor, speaking ability, and, most importantly, acceptability to the Kikuyu as well as the other tribes. Nevertheless, members of the establishment have expressed their determination to maintain their positions after Kenyatta is gone. Because there is no Kikuyu with sufficient national popularity to be a natural successor, they had apparently settled on Daniel arap Moi, a member of the Kalerjin group of tribes [redacted]

[redacted] but the clique considers him amenable to Kikuyu "guidance."

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Since the elections, however, the succession picture has become more cloudy. Moi managed to retain both his parliamentary seat and the vice presidency, and still appears the most likely candidate if Kenyatta dies in the immediate future. Nevertheless, his succession to the presidency is

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KENYA

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- Province capital
- Province boundary
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not assured. At least some of the ruling clique believe that Moi's performance as vice president has been so inept that many Kenyans and even foreign observers regard him as merely a Kikuyu stooge. Moreover, Moi's tribal background precludes his admission to the inner circles of the Kikuyu clique; they would probably prefer a Kikuyu who would be more reliable, by tribal definition, as president.

There are rumblings that Moi will even be challenged for the leadership of the Kalenjin group by politicians critical of his subservience to the Kikuyu. If Moi loses control of the Kalenjin bloc of votes, he would no longer be a credible candidate. Although Moi's prospects thus seem to be faltering, none of the other possible Kikuyu candidates appears to be acceptable to the other tribes. It remains to be seen whether the Kikuyu will designate another candidate or whether one of the younger politicians will be able to establish a genuine national popularity and challenge the clique's candidate.

TWO NEW PROBLEMS: THE MILITARY IN POLITICS AND UNDERGROUND OPPOSITION

The possibility that the military might become involved in politics is an entirely new factor that has developed as a result of the tribal tensions and government actions since Mboya's assassination. Bred in British traditions, Kenyan Army officers had shown little interest in politics. Moreover, with one Kikuyu exception, all the top officers are Kambas, a tribe that was traditionally tolerant of the Kikuyu.

In recent months, however, the chief of the Defense Staff, Major General Joel Ndolo, has been extremely critical of the government's failure to deal effectively with unrest. Ndolo still claims that he is personally loyal to Kenyatta. He has privately criticized both the government and

corrupt politicians, in phrases reminiscent of pronouncements used to justify various military take-overs in Africa. He has been disturbed because Kikuyu in the army are stealing ammunition and giving it to civilians. In addition, the general was disgusted by a resurgence of tribal oath-taking among the Kikuyu—presumably instigated by the ruling clique—designed to unify the tribe in the face of growing opposition from the Luo and others. Ndolo was particularly incensed by the attempt to extend oath-taking to the army and to his own Kamba tribe. In an unprecedented action with political overtones, he moved his troops to less sensitive areas without prior government approval, in what was apparently an attempt to discourage further oath-taking in the army.

There is little information on the attitudes of other officers toward politicians and the military's role in politics. Several senior army officers are known to be very bitter because the Kenya armed forces do not have modern weaponry and because Kenyatta recently appointed a Kikuyu crony,

defense minister. Many of these officers are now believed to be increasingly wary of Kikuyu



Maj. Gen. Ndolo

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intentions. They fear that Kenyatta will seek to ensure his control of the army by promoting a Kikuyu to commander even though a Kamba is next in line.

The government has been concerned over military loyalties. If the military attempts to intervene, the Kikuyu reportedly plan to rely on the General Service Unit, a tough paramilitary police force, as a counterpoise. There is little evidence, however, that the unit could or would oppose the army.

The banning of the KPU has created still another problem for Kenyatta's government. While the party was legal, it provided haven for leftists who opposed the government's pro-Western alignment and its conservative domestic policies. The left opposition was, therefore, easily identified. With the KPU now illegal, it will be more difficult to identify opposition elements that may attempt to form an underground organization or to take over the ruling party from within.

Predictably, the KPU activists who were outside the country during the roundup in Kenya are attempting to get a revolutionary movement going overseas. KPU representatives are known to be hopeful of obtaining funds from Algeria, East Germany, Egypt, and the Soviet Union, but there is as yet no evidence that they will actually get much, if any. It is an open question whether these few KPU activists have any support or connections within Kenya. If they should attempt to return, there is little doubt that the government would order their arrest.

OUTLOOK

Kenya's new parliament has yet to meet, but there are already some signs of what direction Kenya's politics will take in the next few months. The recent announcement of cabinet appointments suggests that President Kenyatta does not intend to make any basic policy changes. All the old-line Kikuyu were appointed to cabinet posts, although the portfolios were reshuffled. The cabinet and immediate subcabinet were again stacked in favor of the Kikuyu, more particularly Kenyatta's southern Kikuyu fellow clansmen.

A return to serious unrest in the next several months seems unlikely. The public's sense of satisfaction from the election outcome should allow Kenyatta a political honeymoon period. With Kenyatta in control, however, there is little likelihood of any meaningful solution to the tribal problem. The Kikuyu are not ready to give away any power, and Kenyatta's mental flexibility will decrease further with old age. On the other hand, bickering will undoubtedly increase as the newly elected non-Kikuyu members, attempting to obtain economic help for their areas, run into the intransigent Kikuyu ministers. Although these and other intertribal problems should continue to be worked out in political forums, an occasional tribal flare-up would not be surprising.

The next major political milestone is likely to be reached when Kenyatta dies. Whether Kenya will be able to make the transition without destructive tribal violence remains open to question.

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